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# NASA Procedural Requirements

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**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**

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## NASA Performance Management Plan for the Senior Executive Service w/Change 1 (3/29/04)

**Responsible Office: Personnel Division**

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## Change History

### **NPR 3435.1F, NASA Performance Management Plan for the Senior Executive Service**

1	03/29/04	Deletions made as a result of ADI/Jennings' memo dated 12/05/03. Administrative changes made throughout to correct responsible office codes, names, and to change NPG to NPR.
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# Preface

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## P.1 Purpose

P.1.1. The NASA Performance Management System for the Senior Executive Service (SES) encourages excellence in performance, facilitates the accurate evaluation of performance based on performance results, provides for the systematic appraisal of performance, and provides a basis for pay, awards, development, retention, removal, and other personnel decisions. The system enhances the achievement of Agency goals by expecting and encouraging managerial excellence in individual and organizational performance and holding executives accountable for results. The system focuses on improved communication and goal clarity and provides for participative performance planning, setting, and communicating individual and organization goals and expectations that are linked to strategic planning initiatives and the results-oriented goals of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, continual performance monitoring to assess achievements, and annual appraisals of performance using measures that balance organizational results with customer, employee, and stakeholder perspectives.

## P.2 Applicability

The NASA Performance Management System for the Senior Executive Service (NPR 3435.1A) serves as an umbrella system and is applicable to all components of NASA. Within this framework, the Office of the Inspector General may create a subordinate system in order to maintain its statutory independence and more effectively meet its mission requirements within its unique organizational culture.

## P.3 Authority

P.3.1 5 U.S.C. Sections 3392(c), 3393a, 3592.

P.3.2 5 U.S.C. Sections 4311 - 4315.

P.3.3 5 CFR Section 317.504

P.3.4 5 CFR Part 359, Subparts C and E.

P.3.5 5 CFR Part 430, Subpart C.

## P.4 References

NPD 3000.1, Management of Human Resources.

NPR 3100.1, Management of the Senior Executive Service.

NASA SES Appraisal Form, NASA Form 1396

## P.5 Cancellation

NASA NPR 3435.1, dated May 7, 1999

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**Assistant Administrator for**

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## Distribution:

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# Chapter 1. Definitions

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1.1 Appraisal period The 1-year period from July 1 through June 30 for which a senior executive's performance will be appraised and rated.

1.2 Balanced Measures An approach to performance measurement that balances organizational results with the perspectives of distinct groups, including customers and employees.

1.3 Critical Elements Key components of an executive's work that contribute to organizational goals and results and are so important that unsatisfactory performance of an element would make the executive's overall job performance unsatisfactory.

1.3.1 Reserved

1.3.2 Reserved

1.4 Executive Position Managers (EPM's) Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices (OIC's) and Center Directors.

1.5 Institutional Program Officers (IPO's) Enterprise Associate Administrators with the dominant activity at a NASA Center.

1.6 Minimum Appraisal Period The minimum amount of time that an executive must be under a performance plan before a rating may be assigned In NASA, this period is 120 days.

1.7 Performance The accomplishment of the work described in the senior executive's performance plan.

1.8 Performance Appraisal The review and evaluation of a senior executive's performance against performance elements and requirements.

1.9 Performance Management System The NASA policies and practices established to plan, record, monitor, evaluate, and reward both individual and organizational performance and from which resulting performance information is used to make personnel decisions.

1.10 Performance Plan The written summary of work the senior executive is expected to accomplish during the appraisal period and the requirements against which performance is evaluated. The plan addresses all critical elements established for the senior executive.

1.11 Performance Requirement A written statement of the performance expected for a Critical Element.

1.12 Performance Review Board (PRB) A board required by law to make recommendations to the Administrator on the performance of senior executives The Senior Executive Committee (SEC) serves as the PRB for Associate Administrators, Center Directors, executives assigned to the Office of the Administrator, and members of the PRB.

1.13 Progress Review A review of the executive's progress in meeting performance requirements It is not a performance rating.

1.14 Ratings

1.14.1 Element Rating The rating assigned to the MCE and all ACE's in an executive's performance plan.

1.14.2 Summary Ratings

1.14.2.1 Initial Summary Rating The overall rating level the immediate supervisor derives from appraising the senior executive's performance at the end of the appraisal period and forwards to the PRB.

1.14.2.2 Annual Summary Rating The overall rating level that the Administrator assigns at the end of the appraisal period after considering the PRB recommendation. This is the official rating.

### 1.15 Rating Levels.

1.15.1 Element Rating Levels. The MCE and each ACE of an executive's Performance Plan are rated at one of five levels:

1.15.1.1 Outstanding Performance exceeds performance requirements to an exceptional degree.

1.15.1.2 Highly Successful Performance exceeds performance requirements to a substantial degree.

1.15.1.3 Fully Successful Performance fully meets performance requirements.

1.15.1.4 Minimally Satisfactory Performance only partially meets performance requirements.

1.15.1.5 Unsatisfactory Performance does not meet performance requirements.

1.15.2 Initial and Annual Summary Rating Levels These ratings are derived from the ratings of an executive's MCE and all ACE's.

1.15.2.1 Outstanding Performance in the total position exceeds performance requirements to an exceptional degree. Normally, when all elements are rated "Outstanding," any deviation must be fully justified in the Narrative Summary of the appraisal and be approved by the PRB.

1.15.2.2 Highly Successful Performance in the total position exceeds performance requirements to a substantial degree. Normally, when the MCE or a majority of all are rated "Highly Successful," and elements are rated below "Fully Successful," any deviation must be fully justified in the Narrative Summary of the appraisal and be approved by the PRB.

1.15.2.3 Fully Successful Performance in the total position fully meets performance requirements. Normally, when the MCE or a majority of all elements are rated below "Fully Successful," any deviation must be fully justified in the Narrative Summary of the appraisal and be approved by the PRB.

1.15.2.4 Minimally Satisfactory Performance in the total position only partially meets performance requirements. Normally, when the MCE or any ACE is rated "Minimally Satisfactory" and no Elements are rated "Minimally Satisfactory," any deviation must be fully justified in the Narrative Summary of the appraisal and be approved by the PRB.

1.15.2.5 Unsatisfactory Performance in the total position does not meet any performance requirements. Normally, when the MCE or any ACE is rated "Unsatisfactory" any deviation must be fully justified in the Narrative Summary of the appraisal and be approved by the PRB.

1.16 Strategic Planning Initiatives Agency strategic plans, Agency annual performance plans, organizational work plans, and other related initiatives.

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## Chapter 2. Basic Provisions

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### 2.1 Responsibilities

2.1.1 The Administrator approves the Annual Summary Rating for all NASA senior executives.

2.1.2 EPM's implement NASA performance appraisal policy, conduct the annual performance appraisal process, and recommend performance awards or other appropriate personnel actions for senior executives in their organization. They provide training and disseminate information on the NASA Performance Management System to each senior executive under their cognizance.

2.1.3 IPO's exercise management oversight over executive resources at the Centers where their activity is dominant. They consolidate documentation required by the PRB and provide interleaved lists of senior executives nominated for bonuses.

2.1.4 The PRB reviews Initial Summary Ratings and recommends Annual Summary Ratings for the Administrator's approval. The PRB evaluates the effectiveness of the NASA Appraisal System and reports its findings and any appropriate recommendations for process improvement to EPM's and appropriate policy changes to the Associate Administrator for Human Resources and Education.

2.1.5 Immediate supervisors of senior executives consult with senior executives and develop individual performance plans at the beginning of the appraisal period, conduct at least one midterm progress review, maintain records necessary to document performance, appraise performance, and assign and discuss the Initial Summary Rating with senior executives they supervise. They provide completed Initial Summary Rating documentation for PRB review. They recommend performance-based personnel actions, as appropriate.

### 2.2 System Requirements

2.2.1 Performance requirements are established and conveyed by the supervisor in consultation with each senior executive at the beginning of the appraisal period. A written performance plan will be provided to the senior executive, normally within 30 calendar days after the beginning of the appraisal period.

2.2.2 Normally, each executive will be given a rating as of June 30 each year.

2.2.3 When a rating cannot be prepared as of June 30 because the executive has not served under a performance plan for the minimum appraisal period (120 days) by June 30, the executive's appraisal period shall be extended for the amount of time necessary to meet the minimum appraisal period, and a rating will be determined as of that date.

2.2.4 The appraisal of a senior executive's performance and the assignment of an Initial Summary Rating at the end of an appraisal period is the responsibility of the supervisor of record in the organization to which the executive is permanently assigned on that date. If a senior executive serves in more than one position during an appraisal period, each supervising official will provide rating input for consideration by the supervisor of record in the assessment for the total period.

2.2.5 When a senior executive changes jobs or transfers to another agency after completing the minimum appraisal period, the supervisor must appraise the executive's performance in writing before the executive leaves, and this appraisal must be considered by the gaining supervisor when developing the Initial Summary Rating at the end of the appraisal period.

2.2.6 An executive may provide a written response within 10 days of receipt of an Initial Summary Rating and/or request a higher level review.

2.2.7 The PRB will consider the Initial Summary Rating, any written response from the senior executive, any

recommended different ratings, and any comments from successive higher review(s) and recommend an Annual Summary Rating The PRB may conduct any further review it finds necessary before determining a recommendation.

2.2.8 The final Annual Summary Rating is determined by the Administrator In making this determination, the Administrator must consider the recommendation of the PRB.

2.2.9 Except within 120 days after the beginning of a new Presidential administration with respect to career appointees, a performance appraisal period may be terminated and an Initial Summary rating assigned if an executive has served for at least 120 days in the SES under a performance plan, when a supervisory official determines that an adequate basis exists on which to appraise the senior executive's performance A plan to assist in improving performance must be developed before an appraisal period is terminated for less-than-fully successful performance The plan may include, but is not limited to, formal training, on-the-job training, counseling, and closer supervision.

2.2.10 Performance appraisals and ratings may not be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

2.2.11 A career senior executive with an Annual Summary Rating of Fully Successful or above is eligible to be considered for an SES Performance Award (Bonus), an increase in pay, Presidential Rank Award (after a minimum of 3 years in the SES), and Incentive Awards.

2.2.12 A career senior executive with an Annual Summary Rating of less than Fully Successful may be considered for a reduction in pay.

2.2.13 A career senior executive who receives an Annual Summary Rating of "Unsatisfactory" will be reassigned to another SES position or removed from the SES.

2.2.14 A career senior executive who receives two "Unsatisfactory" Annual Summary Ratings during any 5-year period or two less-than-"Fully Successful" Annual Summary Ratings during any 3-year period must be removed from the SES.

2.2.15 A career senior executive who is removed from the SES for performance shall be entitled to placement in a continuing position at GS-15 or above (or an equivalent position) without loss of pay An otherwise eligible senior executive removed from the SES for performance may elect discontinued-service retirement rather than fall back to a GS-15 position.

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## Chapter 3. Performance Appraisal Process

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### 3.1 General

Active participation of the senior executive with the supervisor in the total performance appraisal process is important to overall system effectiveness. Experience has shown that a higher level of understanding and acceptance is achieved when work plans and performance requirements are developed jointly. Recognizing this concept, it is imperative that the performance requirements be established in consultation with each senior executive. Each phase of the appraisal process requires specific actions, of both the supervising official and the subordinate senior executive, which must be conscientiously carried out if optimum benefit is to be derived.

### 3.2 Phase I: Performance Planning

3.2.1 The first step in the appraisal process is define Element and Performance Requirements for the appraisal period. These Element and Performance Requirements must be linked to NASA strategic planning initiatives. This is accomplished by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the senior executive and is documented in the senior executive's performance plan.

3.2.1.1 Reserved.

3.2.1.2 Reserved.

3.2.2.1 Reserved.

3.2.2.2 Reserved.

3.2.2.3 Reserved.

### 3.3 Phase II: Progress Reviews

3.3.1 Progress reviews may be initiated at any time by the supervisor or the senior executive. At a minimum, one progress review must be conducted between December 1 and January 31, midway into the appraisal period. The plan should be signed and dated to document the midterm review. The primary purposes of the progress review(s) are to--

3.3.1.1. Examine the current level of performance, give feedback to the executive, and if appropriate, explore ways to improve performance.

3.3.1.2. Identify and resolve problems beyond the executive's control (e.g., resource constraints) that constitute obstacles to organizational or individual performance.

3.3.1.3. Revise the performance plan to reflect new requirements or changes that necessitate revision in program emphasis; establish new requirements for the appraisal period that were not known at the time of the performance planning session; delete requirements no longer appropriate in light of current conditions.

3.3.2 Changes should be documented in the performance plan.

### 3.4 Phase III: Performance Assessment

3.4.1 At the end of the appraisal period, the supervisor and the senior executive discuss the actual individual and organizational achievements during the appraisal period. The basic steps in the assessment phase are as follows:

3.4.1.1 Performance is assessed by the immediate supervisor by comparing the executive's performance to the

performance requirements specified in the plan. The assessment will be based on individual and organizational performance, taking into account such factors as results achieved in accordance with the goals of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the effectiveness, productivity, and performance of assigned employees, meeting safety and diversity goals, and complying with merit system principles. Customer, employee, and other stakeholder perspectives will be included in this assessment.

3.4.1.2. No specific mechanisms are prescribed for considering customer, employee, and other stakeholder perspectives. At their discretion, rating officials may use formal mechanisms such as surveys or less formal mechanisms such as unsolicited customer and employee feedback and analysis of personnel data (e.g., turnover rates, diversity reports, grievances, and workforce awards and recognition).

3.4.1.3 The supervisor provides a performance assessment and an Initial Summary Rating of the senior executive's performance. This involves assigning one of the individual element rating levels to each element in the performance plan and assigning an overall rating as the Initial Summary Rating. The individual element ratings, the Initial Summary Rating, and a narrative description of the accomplishments that support these ratings are documented on the appraisal form. The narrative must cover both managerial and technical accomplishments.

3.4.1.4 The supervisor discusses the Initial Summary Rating with the senior executive and forwards the completed performance appraisal, through the management chain, to the PRB.

3.4.1.5 If the executive wants to provide a written response to an Initial Summary Rating, the response must be submitted within 10 days of receipt of the rating. If an executive requests a higher level review, successive reviews are conducted by officials at the next higher level(s) within the management chain (if any). Depending upon the level of the senior executive, the next higher level(s) would be the EPM and/or the IPO. Each higher reviewing official will either concur with the Initial Summary Rating or recommend a different rating and may provide written comments. Should any higher level official recommend a different rating or make written comments concerning the Initial Summary Rating, copies will be provided to each principal (e.g., the senior executive, the supervisor, the EPM) and will be forwarded to the next higher level of review and/or the PRB.

3.4.1.6 The PRB will consider the Initial Summary Rating, any comments and/or recommendations by higher level official(s), and any written response by the senior executive in recommending an Annual Summary Rating to the Administrator. Should the PRB find it necessary, it may conduct a further review before determining a recommendation.

3.4.1.7. The final Annual Summary Rating is determined by the Administrator. In making this determination, the Administrator must consider the recommendation of the PRB. The senior executive is provided a copy of the Annual Summary Rating on completion of the annual performance review process.

## 3.5 Next Appraisal Period

During the detailed discussion of current year performance with the senior executive, or as an outgrowth of it, performance planning for the next appraisal period begins. A written performance plan is provided to the senior executive within 30 calendar days after the beginning of the new appraisal period.

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## Chapter 4. Documentation of Performance Related Records

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4.1 All senior executives shall be provided copies of the following documents at the time they are prepared: the Initial Summary Rating, written notification of the right to request a higher level review, any written comments or recommendations for a different rating by a higher level reviewing official, and the final Annual Summary Rating.

4.2 Performance-related records for all senior executives shall be maintained by the NASA Personnel Division, NASA Headquarters, for no less than 5 years from the date the final Annual Summary Rating is issued.

4.3 When a senior executive moves to another SES position, either within NASA or with another agency, all appropriate performance-related records 5 years old or less shall be forwarded in the Employee Performance File along with the executive's Official Personnel Folder.

4.4 When a NASA career senior executive accepts a Presidential appointment (5 U.S.C. Section 3392(c)), the performance file shall be forwarded to and maintained by the gaining organization throughout the length of the appointment.

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# Chapter 5.

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**Reserved**